

## **SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT ON THE PROPOSED CHESNIMNUS FOREST RESERVE OREGON**

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### **SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT ON THE PROPOSED CHESNIMNUS FOREST RESERVE, OREGON**

#### Location and Topography

The territory covered by this proposed reserve occupies the extreme northeastern corner of the State and includes a chain of comparatively low-lying hills which separate the valley of the Wallowa River from the lower Snake River region.

The altitude of the highest summit of these hills does not exceed that of the Wallowa Valley by more than 2,000 feet and the ascent eastward to the maximum elevation is over a very gentle gradient. From the summit northward the slope is correspondingly gradual toward Snake and Grande Ronde Rivers. The mean altitude of the ridges is about 4,600 feet. No prominent topographic features are presented, but the entire territory is characterized by a succession of draws, gullies, and canyons radiating from the low but well-defined divides which separate the waters of the unimportant creeks which find their sources among the hills. Principal among these streams is Chesnimnus Creek which heads near the eastern line of the withdrawal and follows a sinuous course along the southern base of the main divide until its waters are united with those of Crow, Eagle, and Swamp Creeks to form Joseph Creek – so named after the famous Nez Perce warrior, Chief Joseph, who, with his followers, claimed this part of the State for their own. Chesnimnus is a Nez Perce word meaning “hawthorn encampment”.

It would appear from the number of streams shown upon the map that this is a well-watered region but, in fact, the summer season reduces the discharge to a very limited quantity, most of the tributaries drying up entirely. The watershed south of Chesnimnus, which separates the latter from the Wallowa Valley, is almost destitute of timber and the streams dry up early in the season. Springs are numerous everywhere, however, and afford an ample water supply for range stock.

#### Area

The original withdrawal covers approximately 324,118 acres, of which 170,758 acres are surveyed and 153,360 unsurveyed. It was found, upon examination, that a large part of the land is open sagebrush or grass country, particularly on the northern slope of the hills toward Snake River and south of the Chesnimnus. This condition, together with

the fact that large tracts of alienated land occur within the surveyed townships, has necessitated a reduction to a recommended area of 185,140 acres, including 14,720 acres not covered by the withdrawal.

### Climate

As shown in my report on the Wallowa Reserve, this territory is within the semi-arid region. Irrigation is essential to the production of crops, the average rainfall being only 17.79 inches at Joseph, in the Wallowa Valley. Rainfall continues until about July 1, and is followed by dry conditions until September 1 to 10, when the fall rains begin and continue intermittently until December, when snow falls at the higher altitudes. Four to six feet of snow is deposited upon the mountains, to disappear in floods during the spring thaw.

### The Forest

A part of the forest is much broken by interspersed tracts of open grass and scab land, presenting a patched and irregular appearance, but on the main divide and on the tablelands westward it is fairly continuous.

Yellow pine is the prevailing species upon the major portion of the lands. It occurs in almost pure stands of uniform character over all of the lower zone, but at the higher elevations Douglas spruce, tamarack, white fir and lodgepole pine become important and abundant components of the forest, the latter often covering wide stretches of canyon slopes. The stands of merchantable species vary in volume from the scattered yellow pine of the marginal forest to fairly dense types estimating as high as 20 M. feet B.M. per acre of clean saw-timber. Cruisers' estimates run as high as 4,000 M. feet per quarter, but these figures are obviously too high. Mr. Clark gives the low estimate of 2213 feet per acre for the entire timbered district or a total of 416,500 M. feet, but adds that this will about cover the accessible stands. It is estimated that 167,580 acres of the lands covered by my recommendations are forested and 17,720 acres grass or scab land. Owing to the fact that I have eliminated many of the sparsely timbered sections and added others which are well timbered, I assume that the average will be raised to 3,500 feet per acre, giving a total stand of 586,530 M. feet, as follows:

<u>Stand of Timber</u>	<u>M. Feet</u>
Yellow Pine	325,000
Tamarack	36,660
White Fir	73,320
Douglas Spruce	65,000
Lodgepole Pine	86,550
Total	586,530

### Alienated Lands

As a glance at the plat herewith will show, a large part of the surveyed townships has been alienated under the Homestead law and other forms of entry. The following table shows the extent and character of these locations within the boundaries recommended:

	<u>Acres</u>
Homestead entries	1,800
Timber and stone entries, in effect	840
Timber and stone entries, suspended	1,960
Patented	1,760
School	1,320
Unapproved State sections	40
Total	7,720
Per cent of proposed reserve	4.11

The existence of these adverse holdings has necessitated the establishment of a very irregular boundary in an effort to reduce, as far as possible, the amount of base available for lieu selections; and it is confidently believed that but a very small per cent of the included alienated lands will ever be relinquished, for the reason that the locations were made for the value the lands possess and not for speculation. Most of the homesteads are occupied by actual settlers, and those which are not are held by stockmen for range purposes. The value of these claims will increase rather than lesson upon the creation of the reserve, hence the present holders, in the event of the locations being abandoned, will relinquish title to other individuals rather than to the Government. In the case of the timberland locations it is shown that only 840 acres are held by rights as yet unquestioned. It is probable that at least a part of the suspended entries, aggregating 1960 acres, will be finally cancelled, to the benefit of the reserve, but should such action not be taken, no motive is apparent to warrant the belief that the claimants will surrender their rights, because they have selected the best to be found, the lands are of actual prospective value for the timber upon them, and the time of its removal is remote beyond the period of available lands for lieu selections.

At the time this withdrawal was made timberland locators were rushing into this district for the purpose of securing all of the timbered tracts, presumably in the interest of an eastern syndicate represented, it is alleged, by one Mosely, of Spokane, Washington. Upon learning these facts I wired a request for the withdrawal. The prompt action which followed prevented a large number of entries, and stage loads of intending locators were recalled before reaching their destination. Many claims had been located previously but, as later developments show, the promoters of the scheme became disgusted because of this interruption of their plans and apparently failed to provide the

necessary funds to the locators, with the result that almost all of the locations in the main timber belt have lapsed through failure on the part of the applicants to make final proof. The withdrawal and the presence of Government agents in the field gave credence to the fear that all entries would be carefully investigated and, as a result, the coveted lands were forfeited.

There are a few squatters on unsurveyed lands along Joseph Creek whose claims will be affected by the creation of the reserve, but they are bona fide settlers and will, therefore, retain their rights to patent upon completion of surveys.

### Industries

Grazing and farming are the only industries within or about the reserve with the exception of well-developed mining operations along Snake River near the reserve line, and two small sawmills in operation. Of the latter, one is located in Sec. 9, Tp. 3 N., R. 48 E. and engaged in cutting timber for the mines; the other is in Tp. 2 N., R. 45, and cuts for the local trade in the Wallowa Valley. The little mining town of Eureka has been built up at the confluence of Snake and Imnaha Rivers during the past two years and mining activity promises to develop that section materially.

### Grazing

Grazing is by far the most important interest identified with the proposed reserve at the present time.

The entire area affords excellent grazing ground and is especially well adapted to cattle and horses, though the higher elevations could be used to better advantage by sheep. The lower portions of this part of Wallowa County are used as winter range for the large number of sheep owned locally, and in the spring the herds move upward to occupy the entire range until the arrival of the season when they can cross the valley and push on to the principal summer range in the proposed Wallowa Reserve.

While the Wallowa Mountains have been conceded to the sheepmen, the cattlemen look upon the Chesnimnus country as their especial range. During the past few years, however, sheepmen have acquired land within this district and by virtue of these holdings claim rights within the cattle section.

About 45,000 sheep range on these lands during part of the summer season and three or four bands remain throughout the year. From 15,000 to 20,000 cattle also frequent this section, coming in from the surrounding valleys or local ranches.

The proposed Wallowa and Chesnimnus Reserves are separated one from the other by distances of from 12 to 25 miles, hence their relations to the industrial welfare of the people are almost identical. For this reason both should be under the same management in order that the closest interrelations may be established.

Because of the complex conditions which exist it is impossible to state definitely the amount of stock which should be permitted to use this range, but the fullest possible license compatible with the welfare of the reserve should be granted. So far as possible sheep should be provided for in the Wallowa Reserve, withholding all of this territory for the use of the cattlemen with the exception of the highest lands, which are best adapted to sheep-grazing.

The range has not been seriously damaged in the past and is enormously productive of excellent grass in the open parks and on the treeless bunch-grass slopes, while throughout the open pine forests more or less resistant grass and other forage occur abundantly.

It is believed that the Wallowa County range is capable of supporting all of the stock owned in the county if properly regulated.

#### Sentiment

At the time the temporary withdrawal of these lands was announced there was a storm of protest from a number of citizens of Wallowa County whose business, growing out of the influx of locators, was affected thereby. This opposition quickly subsided, however, when the fact was made known that agricultural lands would be restored to entry and the reserve confined to timbered areas. At the present time 85 per cent of the people whose interests are directly affected by the withdrawal favor the creation of this reserve.

The mining companies operating along Snake River protest against the inclusion of the west half of Tp. 3 N., R. 48, alleging that they will require all of this timber in the development of their properties, but the companies' interests need not be jeopardized by Government control of these forests so I have included them within the proposed boundaries.

#### Administration

As already intimated, this reserve should be under the same supervision with the Wallowa; the supervisor's headquarters to be at Enterprise, midway between the two reserves.

From the fact that but few fires have ever occurred upon these lands it is not essential that a close patrol be maintained. One man should be sufficient to look after all interests at the present time.

#### Recommendations

In drawing the lines of my final recommendations I have included as much as possible of the timbered sections without interfering with private holdings, in order that a considerable body of timber may be reserved for the use of the residents of this county.

The timber upon these lands is the most available and desirable for future use in this section and demands will be made upon it before many years and then for all time to come. Had the speculators who undertook to secure title to all of this timber succeeded in accomplishing their purpose, it is probable that a railroad would have been constructed to facilitate its removal; and in this way the county would have benefited, but, as one resident expressed it, if the coming of a railroad would destroy one of the county's valuable resources the people were better off without it.

The reserve is not positively essential as a protection to the water supply which flows out from it, for the reason that the outflow is too limited for extremely agricultural development and the water can be used only after expenditures which the volume does not justify. Future development may, however, change these conditions and increase the importance of the reserve along this line.

A permanent supply of timber will be assured to this remote district and the stock industry will be safe-guarded. For these reasons I recommend the creation of the Chesnimnus Forest Reserve, to include the following described lands, to wit:

In Township 5 North, Range 45 East, Willamette Meridian, Oregon, Sections 22 to 28, both inclusive, and Sections 32 to 36, both inclusive.

In Township 5 North, Range 36 East, Sections 19 to 21, both inclusive, the south one-half of Section 22, the south one-half and the northeast one-quarter of Section 23, and Sections 24 to 36, both inclusive.

In Township 5 North, Range 47 East, Sections 18, 19, 20 and Sections 29 to 35, both inclusive.

In Township 4 North, Range 44 East, Sections 1, 12, north half and southeast quarter of Section 13, the east half, the east half of the northwest quarter, and the northeast quarter of the southwest quarter of Section 24; the east half of Section 26, the north half and the west half of the southwest quarter, southeast quarter of the southwest quarter, and the southwest quarter of the southeast quarter of Section 29; Section 30, the east half and north half of the northwest quarter of Section 31 and Section 32.

All of Township 4 North, Range 45 East.

All of Township 4 North, Range 46 East.

All of Township 4 North, Range 47 East.

In Township 4 North, Range 48 East, Section 7, the west half of Section 17; Sections 18, 19 and 20; Sections 28 to 33, both inclusive, and the west half of Section 34.

In Township 3 North, Range 44 East, the south half, northeast quarter, and south half of the northwest quarter of Section 6, Sections 7 and 8, the south half of Sections 9 and

10, Sections 15 to 21, both inclusive, the west half and southeast quarter of Section 22, the southwest quarter of Section 23, and Sections 26 to 30, both inclusive; the east half, northwest quarter, and north half of the southwest quarter of Section 31, and Sections 32 to 35, both inclusive.

In Township 3 North, Range 45 East, Sections 1 and 2, the west half of the west half of Section 3, Sections 4 to 9, both inclusive, the west half of Section 10, Sections 11, 12, 13, the east half of Section 14, the west half of Section 15, Sections 16 to 22, both inclusive, the east half of the northeast quarter, and the northeast quarter of the southeast quarter of Section 23, Section 24 and Sections 27 to 34, both inclusive.

In Township 3 North, Range 46 East, Sections 1 to 4, both inclusive, the north half, the north half of the south half, the southeast quarter of the southeast quarter, and the southwest quarter of the southwest quarter of Section 5, Sections 6 and 7, the east half of the northeast quarter, and the northwest quarter of the northwest quarter of Section 8, Sections 9 to 13, both inclusive, the north half, north half of the south half, southeast east quarter of the southeast quarter, and the southwest quarter of the southwest quarter of Section 14, the east half and the southwest quarter of Section 15, the west half of the west half of Sections 17, Sections 18, 19 and the west half of the west half of Section 20.

In Township 3 North, Range 47 East, Section 1 to 14, both inclusive, the east half, north half of the northwest quarter, and the south half of the southwest quarter of Section 15, the north half, north half of the southeast quarter, and the northeast quarter of the southwest quarter of Section 17, Section 18, the southwest quarter, west half of the southeast quarter, and the southeast quarter of the southeast quarter, Section 20, the northeast quarter, east half of the northwest quarter, and the north half of the southeast quarter of Section 21, Sections 22 to 26, both inclusive, the east half and the northwest quarter of Section 27, the north half of Section 28, Section 29, the southeast quarter, and the southeast quarter of the northeast quarter of Section 30, the north half and southwest quarter of Section 31, the northwest quarter of Section 32, and Section 35.

In Township 3 North, Range 44 East, the north half and southwest quarter of Section 4, Sections 5 to 8, both inclusive, the west half of Section 9, Sections 17 to 20, both inclusive, the west half of Section 21, the west half of Section 28, Sections 29, 30 and 31, the north half of the north half, and the southwest quarter of northwest quarter of Section 32.

In Township 2 North, Range 44 East, Section 1, the east half and northwest quarter of Section 2, the north half and the north half of the southwest quarter of Section 3, the north half and the north half of the south east quarter of Section 4, Section 5, the east half of Section 6, the east half of the northwest quarter, northeast quarter, and the east half of the southeast quarter of Section 11, Sections 12, 13, the north half and southeast quarter of Section 24 and the east half of Section 25.

In Township 2 North, Range 45 East, the south half of Section 4, the southeast quarter of Section 5, the southwest quarter of the southeast quarter, and the southwest quarter of Section 6, Sections 7 and 8, the west half, and the west half of the east half of Section 9, the west half of Section 15, the north half of the north half, south half of the northwest quarter, southwest quarter, and the southwest quarter of the southeast quarter of Section 17, Section 18, the north half, southwest quarter, and north half of the southeast quarter of Section 19, the northwest quarter, north half and southeast quarter of southwest quarter, and the south half of the southeast quarter of Section 20, the south half, southeast quarter of the northwest quarter, south half and northeast quarter of the northeast quarter of Section 21, the west half and the west half of the east half of Section 22, the west half of Section 27, the north half, southeast quarter, and the northeast quarter of the southwest quarter of Section 28, the northeast quarter, north half and southwest quarter of the southeast quarter and the east half of the west half of Section 29, the west half of the northeast quarter, west half and southeast quarter of the southeast quarter and the west half of Section 30, the north half and southeast quarter of the northeast quarter and the east half of the southeast quarter of Section 31, the north half and southeast quarter of the northwest quarter, east half of the southwest quarter, and the east half of Section 32, the west half, southeast quarter, and the south half of the northeast quarter of Section 33, and the northwest quarter of Section 34.